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National Park Service  
Cultural Landscapes Inventory  
1998  
Revised 2001



Thomas Jefferson Memorial  
Thomas Jefferson Memorial

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## Executive Summary

### General Introduction to the CLI

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI) is a comprehensive inventory of all historically significant landscapes within the National Park System. This evaluated inventory identifies and documents each landscape's location, physical development, significance, National Register of Historic Places eligibility, condition, integrity and current management. Inventoried landscapes are listed on, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise treated as cultural resources. To automate the inventory, the Cultural Landscapes Automated Inventory Management System (CLAIMS) database was created in 1996. CLAIMS provides an analytical tool for evaluating information associated with the CLI.

The information contained within the CLI is derived primarily from existing sources found in parks, libraries, archives, NPS regions and support offices, as well as through on-site investigation of the existing landscape. A variety of steps are involved in completing each cultural landscape inventory, from initial meetings with park management and staff to clarify the purpose of the CLI, to the historical research, to fieldwork and data input into CLAIMS, to assisting with the preparation of State Historic Preservation Officers consensus determination documentation.

Completion of the CLI for each landscape fulfills the inventory requirements of Section 110(a)(1) of the National Historic Preservation Act, NPS Management Policies, and the Cultural Resource Management Guideline. The CLI effort has established a baseline of cultural landscapes in the National Park System and serves as a vehicle for tracking the condition of these resources. Hence, the CLI effort supports the mission and long-term goals of the National Park Service Strategic Plan. Completion of the CLI, and entry of the data into the CLAIMS database, provides each park with an official count of the landscapes in the park, as well as the condition assessment required by the Government Performance Results Act (GPRA).

The Park Cultural Landscapes Program considers completion of the CLI a servicewide priority. The information is needed at the national and regional levels to inform planning efforts and budget decisions. At the park level, the CLI is needed to aid managers in planning, programming, prioritizing funding, enhancing interpretation programs, and recording treatment and management decisions for their park landscapes.

Implementation of the CLI is coordinated on the Regional/Support Office level. Each Region/Support Office creates a priority list for CLI work based on park planning needs, proposed development and construction projects, lack of documentation (which adversely affects the preservation or management of the resource), baseline information needs and regional/support office priorities. The priority list is updated regularly as landscapes are inventoried and as priorities change. Once each landscape's CLI is completed, it is entered into the Regional/Support Office CLAIMS, and uploaded annually to the National Center in Washington, D.C. Only the data officially entered into the National Center database, considered certified data, is used for GPRA reporting.

The CLI is completed in a four level process; each level corresponds to a specific degree of effort and detail. The four levels include:

Level 0: Park Reconnaissance Survey identifies the scope of landscapes and component landscapes in a particular park, existing and needed information about the resources, immediate threats to the resources,

and establishes priorities for Level I inventory. Priorities for Level I are landscapes lacking information and consequently adversely affecting preservation or management of the resource, or is required for current or proposed park planning, resource management efforts, cultural and natural resource research projects (e.g. Historic Resource Study, Cultural Landscape Report, Vegetation Management Plan), or development and construction projects (e.g. utilities upgrade, FHWA projects, section 106 projects).

Level I: Landscape Reconnaissance Survey identifies existing and needed information for a specific landscape or component landscape in a park. Research is the primary function of Level I, involving a literature search of all readily available secondary source material. In addition, a site visit is conducted. Level I provides an initial evaluation of the significance and character of the landscape or component landscape if the landscape has not been previously evaluated or adequately documented. Additionally, priorities are established for Level II inventory. Priorities for Level II inventory are landscapes with immediate threats, proposed development or construction projects, are part of park planning or resource management efforts, have undetermined National Register status, or are lacking information.

Level II: Landscape Analysis and Evaluation identifies the landscape characteristics and their associated features of a specific landscape or component landscape. A landscape's National Register eligibility is determined or clarified if necessary. Level II includes condition assessment, as well as costs associated with treatment and stabilization. A Level II for landscapes or component landscapes whose National Register eligibility was formerly undetermined, is completed with a consensus determination by the State Historic Preservation Office. Finally, priorities are established for Level III inventory and the preparation of Cultural Landscape Reports. Priorities for Level III inventories are landscape features whose significance, condition, park planning or resource management objectives require a more detailed level of information. The CLI is not considered complete until a Level II CLI is finished.

Level III: Feature Inventory and Assessment provides an inventory and evaluation of a physical feature identified in Level II as contributing to the significance of a landscape or component landscape. In addition, the condition of the feature is assessed and costs associated with treatment are recorded.

As the inventory process proceeds from Level 0 to II, additional information is collected, prior information is refined, and decisions regarding if and how to proceed are made. The relationship between Level 0, I and II is direct; the CLI is not considered finished until Level II has been fully completed.

The ultimate goal of the Park Cultural Landscapes Program is a completed inventory of landscapes, component landscapes, and associated features in the National Parks. The end result, when combined with the List of Classified Structures (LCS), will be an inventory of all physical aspects of any given property.

#### Relationship between the CLI and a CLR

While there are some similarities, the CLI is not the same as a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR). Using secondary sources, the CLI provides information to identify historic significance and determine whether there are features still present to generally convey that historic significance. The CLI includes the preliminary identification and analysis to define contributing features, but does not provide the more definitive detail contained within a CLR.

A Cultural Landscape Report involves more in-depth research, using primary rather than secondary source material. The CLR is a treatment document and presents recommendations on how to preserve

the identified landscape and its contributing features. Conversely, the CLI records previous management decisions relating to the landscape and may advise on simple and appropriate mitigation for adverse impacts affecting the landscape. The CLI does not contain any new recommendations on preservation treatment, other than a very general cost estimate for stabilizing the landscape and its features.

Once the park makes the decision to manage and treat an identified cultural landscape, the Historical Landscape Architect providing technical assistance to the park can assist the park in deciding whether an identified landscape needs a Cultural Landscape Report to develop specific recommendations for treatment. For minimal actions, a CLI may be sufficient to guide Section 106 assessments of impacts.

## Park Information

**Park Name:** Thomas Jefferson Memorial  
**Administrative Unit:** National Capital Parks-Central  
**Park Organization Code:** 3491  
**Park Alpha Code:** JEFM

## Property Level And CLI Number

**Property Level:** Landscape  
**Name:** Thomas Jefferson Memorial  
**CLI Identification Number:** 600004  
**Parent Landscape CLI ID Number:** 600004

## Inventory Summary

**Inventory Level:** Level II

### Completion Status:

#### Level 0

Date Data Collected - Level 0: 3/1/1998  
Level 0 Recorder: Maureen Joseph  
Date Level 0 Entered: 3/1/1998  
Level 0 Data Entry Recorder: Maureen Joseph  
Level 0 Site Visit: No

#### Level I

Date Level I Data Collected: 8/15/1998  
Level I Data Collection: Nancy J. Brown  
Date Level I Entered: 8/15/1998  
Level I Data Entry Recorder: Nancy J. Brown  
Level I Site Visit: Yes

#### Level II

Date Level II Data Collected: 8/15/1998  
Level II Data Collection: Nancy J. Brown, Jennifer Hanna  
Date Level II Entered: 8/15/1998  
Level II Data Entry Recorder: Nancy J. Brown, Jennifer Hanna  
Level II Site Visit: Yes

#### Explanatory Narrative:

This Cultural Landscape Inventory was begun in 1998 as a back-log project. The

majority of the information in this entry comes from the "Thomas Jefferson Memorial: Landscape Overview" by Sally Prothero and Audrey Tepper, completed by the National Park Service Denver Service Center in 1996. Information has been added on the period up to 2001 to update the landscape study to the present. All information pertaining to the Rehabilitation of the Support Facilities, completed in 1998, and the Restoration for the Entrance Steps and Plaza, completed in 1999 and-2000, comes from an interview with Stephen Lorenzetti, Chief of the Division of Resource Management at National Capital Parks - Central. Interviews were held in October 1998. Interviews were held in October 1999 to further update the study. Finally, interviews were made in January of 2001 to provide clarification.

**Revisions:**

Revision Date:	9/1/2001
Recorder:	Jennifer Hanna

**Explanatory Narrative:**

The Thomas Jefferson Memorial CLI was updated in 2001 to reflect subsequent alterations made to the site since 1998, the last CLI entry date.

## Landscape Description

The Jefferson Memorial landscape is comprised of 19.2 acres of land immediately south of the Tidal Basin. With the neo-classical white marble memorial modeled after the Roman Pantheon as its focal point, this component landscape forms the southern end of the kite-shaped design plan for the city proposed by the McMillan Commission in 1902. The planting within the encircling roadway, now used solely by pedestrians, is predominantly evergreen with some small flowering trees and shrubs. Beyond the circular roadway, there are tall shade trees and cherry trees that are part of the ring of flowering cherries that encircles the Tidal Basin. The ring of cherry trees are the characteristic for which the landscape is most noted, and that which attracts thousands of visitors each spring.

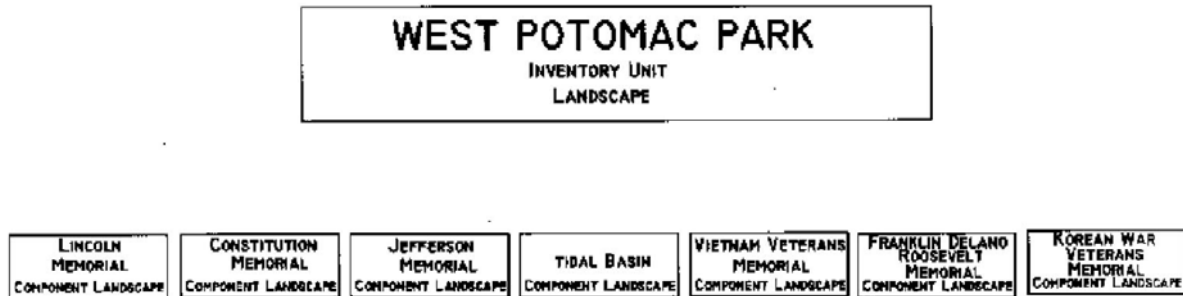
The period of significance for the landscape spans the years from 1934 to 1943. During this period the design for the memorial and landscape was developed, the memorial was constructed, and the landscape was installed. The period ends with the dedication of the memorial on April 13, 1943, the 200th anniversary of Jefferson's birth.

Because the land has been continuously used as a memorial site since the period of significance, the integrity of this historic landscape is generally high. Lack of alteration to natural systems, spatial organization, land use, topography, and structures preserves the integrity of these characteristics, but changes in vegetation and circulation have resulted in their loss of integrity. Work recently completed or scheduled for completion by the end of 2000 addresses the need to restore the vegetation and circulation to a condition more closely resembling the original. Views and vistas, with the exception of the view to the Lincoln Memorial, have been retained. Additional research is needed to determine the level of integrity of the small scale features on the site.



## Cultural Landscapes Inventory Hierarchy Description

The Jefferson Memorial grounds constitute a single component landscape within West Potomac Park and administered by National Capital Parks - Central. For the purposes of this report, however, the memorial grounds are treated as an individual landscape, functioning as a single unit within the whole and therefore not divisible further into component landscapes. In addition, within this landscape there are a number of landscape features, as noted in the Analysis and Evaluation section.



## Location Map



## Boundary Description

The Jefferson Memorial is located in West Potomac Park. The memorial grounds are bordered on the east and south by East Basin Drive, and on the north and west by the Tidal Basin to the Inlet and Outlet Bridges. The site lies approximately on axis with Maryland Avenue.

## Regional Context

### Cultural Context

The land, the memorial, and its designed landscape are all aspects of the human overlay on the land. At the 1791 meeting of Congress in Philadelphia, Washington, D.C. was chosen to be the nation's capital city. The L'Enfant Plan for Washington (1791) laid out the network of avenues diagonally over the city grid, and positioned important elements on axis with the central mall. The land on which the memorial sits was created as a result of river dredging to keep the Potomac River navigable after a second bridge was built in the vicinity of today's 14th Street Bridge. The memorial site is located at the northern end of the Potomac Flats, which stretched for about two miles parallel to the old river shoreline and created the Washington Channel. In 1897 Congress created Potomac Park, setting aside the area of the Tidal Basin and former flats for the recreation and pleasure of the people. The 1902 McMillan Commission refined the L'Enfant plan, creating the kite-shaped scheme in which the Jefferson Memorial now occupies the memorial site south of the White House, Washington Monument, and Tidal Basin. Beyond the broad expanse of the national mall to the north is the platted grid of the city. To the east lies a tangle of roads and bridges, then more platted streets.

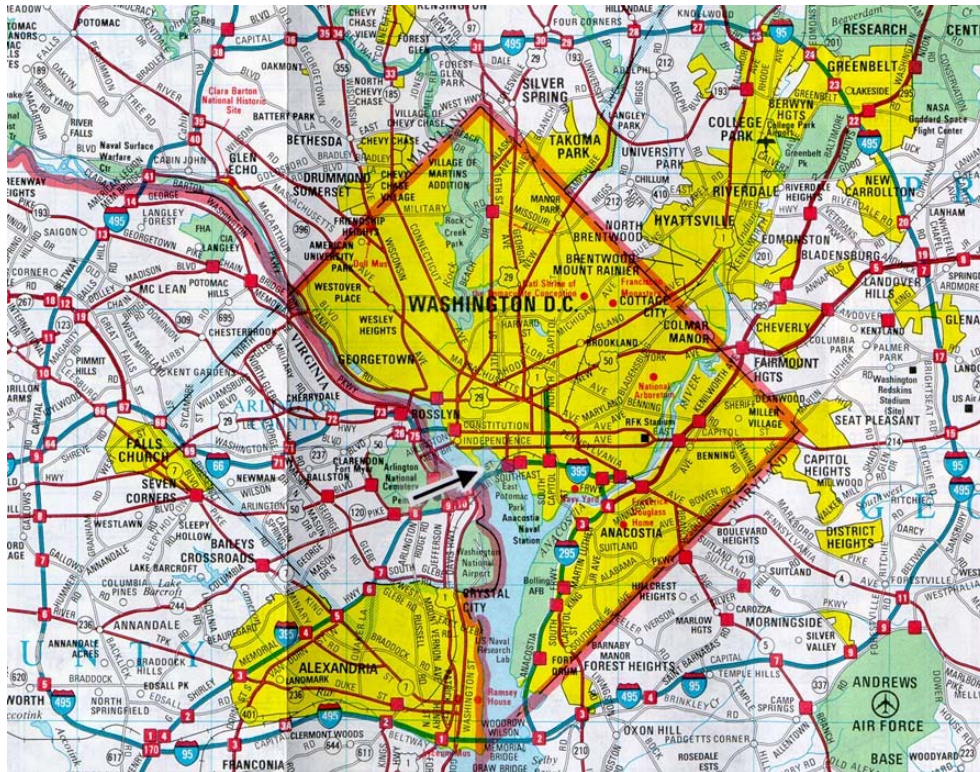
### Physiographic Context

The created land on which the memorial is sited is flat, and just a few feet above both the Potomac River and the constructed Tidal Basin. The memorial was built on low, swampy land and on fill from river dredging. Not far to the southeast, the Anacostia River flows into the Potomac. Across the river to the west lie the rolling hills of Virginia. The surroundings of the landscape incorporate such physiographic features as Jenkin's Hill (now Capitol Hill) and the higher lands of Georgetown.

### Political Context

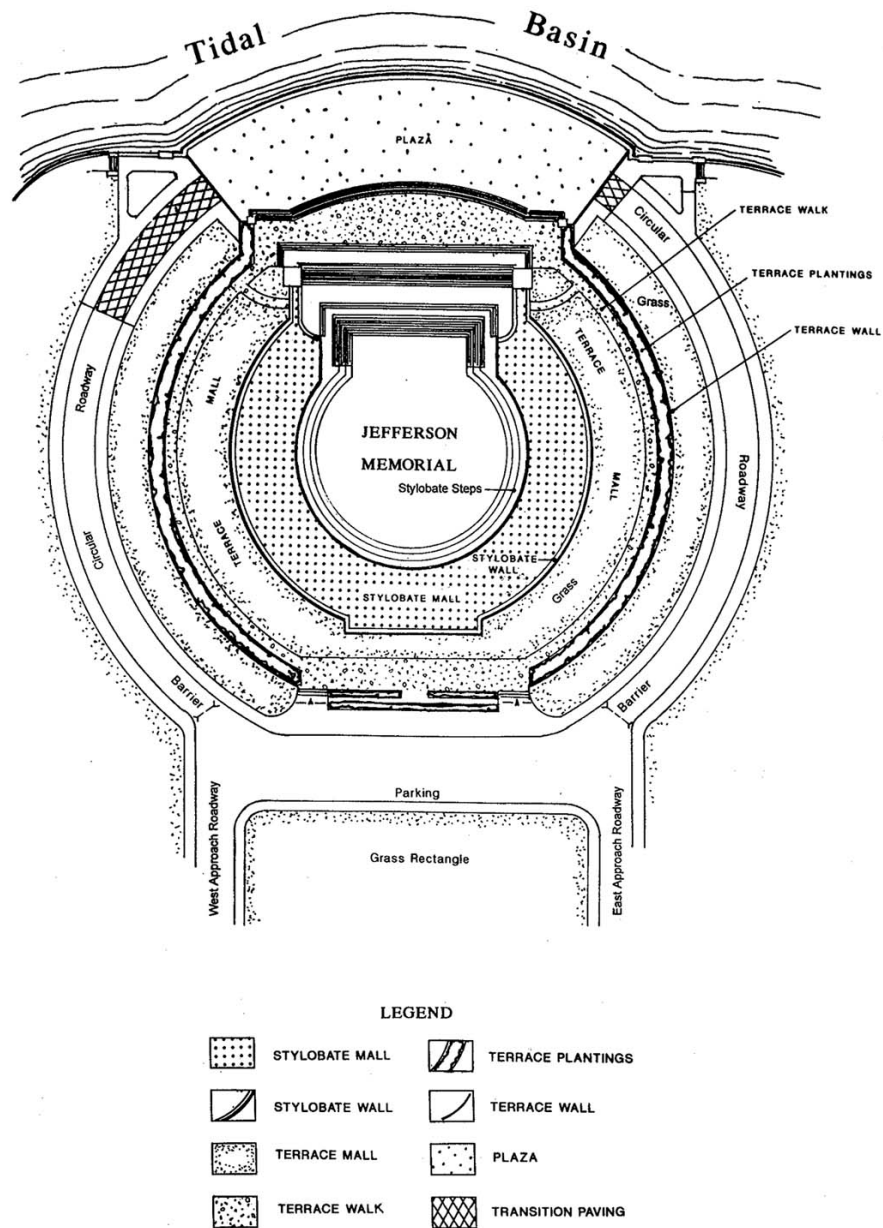
Today the 19.2 acre site is part of the monumental core of the capital city, Washington D.C. The Jefferson Memorial landscape is visited by millions of people each year. It is located on federal land and administered by the National Park Service as part of National Capital Parks - Central.





## Site Plan

Site plan from "Landscape Overview: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial" completed in May of 1996



## Chronology

Year	Event	Description
1790 AD - 1897 AD	Expanded	Washington, D.C. was chosen as the capital and the L'Enfant plan for the city layout was implemented. Siltation of the Potomac was addressed through dredging. From the dredgings land was built up and became the site of the memorial.
1897 AD - 1934 AD	Established	The park was created by act of Congress in 1897 and the 1902 McMillan Plan established the site as a future memorial location. Work continued on the Tidal Basin and in 1912 the first cherry trees were planted.
1934 AD - 1943 AD	Designed	<p>The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission was created in 1934, with Pope starting the design in 1935, and Eggers and Higgins completing it. Beginning in 1938 Olmsted Jr. designed the landscape, with much of the work prepared by employee Henry V. Hubbard.</p> <p>Architect: Pope  Landscape Architect: Olmsted  Architect: John Russell Pope  Landscape Architect: Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.</p>
1938 AD - 1943 AD	Built	<p>Ground-breaking took place in Dec. 1938, and construction began in early 1939. The cornerstone was laid in Nov. 1939; the dedication was on Jefferson's birthday, April 13, 1943.</p> <p>Dedication: Franklin Delano Roosevelt</p>
1943 AD - 1998 AD	Maintained	In 1947 the original plaster statue was replaced with bronze. Various projects have been undertaken to address settling and improve accessibility. Other work included supplementing or replacing vegetation, and installing irrigation.

## Statement Of Significance

The Thomas Jefferson Memorial, designed on the basis of the Pantheon of Rome, is significant as America's foremost memorial to its third president, as an original adaptation of Neoclassical architecture, and as a key landmark in the monumental core of Washington, D.C., in accordance with the McMillan Commission plan of 1902. The Jefferson Memorial was listed as a contributing feature on the National Register of Historic Places nomination for East and West Potomac Parks. That nomination, written in 1973, was updated in 2000. Additional documentation on the Jefferson Memorial was submitted to the National Register in 1981. This landscape is historically significant under National Register criteria A and C. The period of significance for the memorial spans the years from 1934 to 1943. In 1934 Congress established the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission to create a permanent memorial to the third President. That memorial was dedicated on April 13, 1943, the bicentennial of Jefferson's birth. The period of significance for the Jefferson Memorial, 1934 to 1943, falls within the period of significance for East and West Potomac Parks, 1897 to 1943. (Dillon, National Register nomination, 1972)

(The following is adapted from the 1981 documentation of the Jefferson Memorial, submitted as a supplement to the existing 1973 National Register nomination.)

In 1934 Congress created the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission (TJMC). That same year the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) considered possible sites for the monument, which at this point was still intended to take the form of a statue. The site chosen was located next to the Tidal Basin, at the intersection of the White House and Maryland Avenue axes. This spot had been marked as the site of a great memorial by the McMillan Commission as early as 1901. The McMillan Commission envisioned a grand structure on the scale of the White House, Washington Monument, and Lincoln Memorial; either one large monument to a single individual or a pantheon in which statues of various American heroes would be displayed.

In 1937 the TJMC chose John Russell Pope as the architect of the Memorial. In the spirit of the McMillan Plan, Pope's design called for a monolithic pantheon of large dimensions facing north toward the White House. The Tidal Basin was to be transformed into a series of reflecting pools flanked by rectangular terraces outlined with formal rows of trees.

The CFA and the National Capital Parks and Planning Commission (NCPPC), however, brought forth a number of objections and called for alterations in the plan. Their objections were addressed by Daniel P. Higgins and Otto R. Eggers, who became the Memorial architects upon the untimely death of Pope in August 1937. Higgins and Eggers sought to alleviate the commission's concerns in two ways. First, they planned to move the monument 600 feet south of its original site and to decrease the size of the structure for compatibility with the other monuments. Second, they proposed to forgo Pope's designs for elaborate landscaping, thus leaving the Tidal Basin, the street plan, and the majority of cherry trees largely intact. This allowed the landscape of the Tidal Basin to retain its significance and integrity related to the 1912 cherry tree planting. Although these changes went far in pacifying the opponents of the plan, many members of the CFA still objected to the Pantheon design of the Memorial, favoring instead an open peristyle design. This change, however, met the resistance of the TJMC which took its case directly to President Franklin D. Roosevelt who ordered the construction to begin, thus overriding the authority of the CFA.

On December 15, 1938, the ground-breaking took place. Construction began in earnest the following

year with John McShain, Inc. of Philadelphia as the contractor. Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. of Massachusetts was chosen as the project's landscape architect. Olmsted was the son of Frederick Law Olmsted Sr., father of landscape architecture in this country and a noted designer in his own right. As a member of the McMillan Commission and the CFA, he had influenced the early decisions about the location of the memorial.

On November 15, 1939, a ceremony was held in which President Roosevelt laid the cornerstone of the Memorial. Within months the superstructure began to take shape and sculptors were selected for the monument's carvings. In August 1940 the TJMC contracted Adolph A. Weinman to make a carving for the north portico pediment, and six months later it chose Rudolph Evans to sculpt the statue of Jefferson. On April 13, 1943, the bicentennial of Jefferson's birth, the Memorial was dedicated. (N.P.S., National Capital Region, 1981, section 8, pp. 1-2)